

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 964

By Armstrong

A RESOLUTION designating March 6, 2008, as "World Glaucoma Day" in Tennessee, for the purpose of increasing awareness of glaucoma, the second leading cause of preventable blindness in the United States and worldwide.

WHEREAS, glaucoma is a progressive disease of the optic nerve, robbing individuals of both peripheral and central vision; and

WHEREAS, known as the "sneak thief of sight," glaucoma is characterized by a gradual loss of vision; and

WHEREAS, glaucoma affects all age groups, including infants, children, and the elderly; and

WHEREAS, glaucoma disproportionately affects underserved minority populations, with African-Americans having a three times greater risk of developing this disease than White Americans, and glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible vision loss in African-Americans and Hispanics; and

WHEREAS, glaucoma is the second leading cause of preventable vision loss in the United States, afflicting 2,200,000 Americans; glaucoma is the leading cause of permanent blindness worldwide, afflicting 67,000,000 persons, 4.5 million of whom are blind from the disease, and the latter number is expected to more than double by 2020; and

WHEREAS, public awareness is absolutely crucial, as glaucoma often has no symptoms until vision loss occurs; it is estimated that in the United States more than half of the individuals with glaucoma are unaware that they have the disease, and in developing countries, 90 percent of individuals with glaucoma are unaware that they have the disease; and

WHEREAS, with early diagnosis and ongoing treatment 90 percent of the glaucoma cases in which blindness occurs can be avoided; thus, it is crucial that individuals with known

risk factors for glaucoma and those over the age of 40 undergo regular, comprehensive eye examinations that include careful evaluation of the optic nerve and measurement of eye pressure; and

WHEREAS, the first-ever World Glaucoma Day, organized by the World Glaucoma Association and the World Glaucoma Patient Association, aims to enhance global awareness through local educational and public awareness events; newspaper, radio, and television coverage; public glaucoma screening campaigns; and open-door days at glaucoma clinics and departments of ophthalmology; and

WHEREAS, drawing on the collective strength of patient support groups, medical professionals, and glaucoma institutions across the globe, World Glaucoma Day will help countless individuals avoid the preventable vision loss that arises from this prevalent disease; and

WHEREAS, the public needs to know the insidious nature of glaucoma, that there are means for detecting and treating glaucoma to save sight, and the importance of compliance associated with those treatments, and the first-ever World Glaucoma Day is an observance planned to increase global awareness in that regard; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that March 6, 2008, is hereby designated "World Glaucoma Day" in Tennessee." We encourage all Tennesseans to inform themselves and their families about glaucoma by participating in at least one of World Glaucoma Day's associated events.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we commend and thank the many dedicated glaucoma organizations for initiating this crucial public awareness campaign relative to glaucoma.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.